DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 514 CE 073 283

AUTHOR	Briton, Derek
TITLE	The Modern Practice of Adult Education: A Postmodern Critique. Teacher Empowerment and School Reform Series.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-7914-3025-1
PUB DATE	96
NOTE	156p.
AVAILABLE FROM	State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246.
PUB TYPE	Books (010)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Education; Cultural Context; *Educational Philosophy; Educational Practices; Educational Theories; Ideology; *Modernism; Research Methodology; *Scientific Research
IDENTIFIERS	*Postmodernism

ABSTRACT

This book challenges the dominant vision of adult education and the modernist principles underlying contemporary adult education practice. It reviews the emergence of technical rationality as a driving force behind adult education today and examines the critique of the empiricist-analytical tradition of science, considering science as an ideology. The roots of modernism are traced to the Enlightenment preiod, with its exaltation of reason. Next, the problem of choosing a research paradigm is considered, and four dominant paradigms are described: positivism, interpretist critique of positivism, critical social theory, and postmodernism. Two forms of postmodernism are examined: a conservative postmodernism of reaction and an activist postmodernism of resistance (or critical postmodernism). It is suggested that adult education is a cultural practice with moral and political consequences beyond the classroom. Adult educators are identified as cultural workers who willingly or unwillingly reproduce the fundamental beliefs of their culture. Finally, the author proposes for adult education a postmodernist pedagogy of engagement, in which adult educators engage with others in a process of mutual self-examination that allows recognition of discourses as changeable, partial, and historically contingent. (SK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****